



## NETWORKS NEWS

### ■ NTL COMPLETES ADSL2+ BROADBAND TRIALS

NTL has completed its ADSL2+ broadband and TV-over-IP trials, which began in March. The cable franchise demonstrated that its existing copper network is capable of supporting both broadband connections up to 18Mbit/s and high-definition (HD) TV. The first commercially available ADSL2+ services are due in 2006, with BT and Easynet also conducting trials. The technology has a theoretical upper limit of 24Mbit/s, but speeds of 18-20Mbit/s are likely.

### ■ BBC MEDIA PLAYER ONLINE

The BBC announced that from September it will hold three months of intensive trials of its interactive Media Player (iMP). It will make selected TV programmes available for up to a week after they are broadcast, alongside the radio broadcasts currently being streamed and additional channels not yet available online. It also plans to offer feature films. Unlike its current online content – radio stations streamed via its Radio Player application or Real Player – the new system requires users to download programmes. These have embedded DRM software that tells the iMP to delete them once the week expires. The same DRM will prevent programmes from being shared or burned to disc. Broadband users who want to join the trial should email [imptrial@bbc.co.uk](mailto:imptrial@bbc.co.uk).



### HOTLIST WIRELESS ROUTER

## BELKIN Wireless Pre-N Router

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE Router £91 inc VAT;

PC Card £67 inc VAT

SUPPLIER [www.expansys.com](http://www.expansys.com)

DETAILS [www.belkin.com](http://www.belkin.com)

It might not be based on a wireless standard, but Belkin's Wireless Pre-N Router is the fastest wireless product we've ever seen. We measured it at 28.9Mbit/s, which is more than twice as fast as other routers we've tested.

To get the most out of it, you'll have to use it with Belkin's Pre-N wireless adaptors. If you can live with that and the expense, this is an excellent router.



**SPECIFICATIONS** 108Mbit/s router, four-port Ethernet switch, Ethernet WAN port. Part code BELWL13

### REVIEW NETWORK ATTACHED STORAGE

## BUFFALO Terastation 1TB

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £636 inc VAT

SUPPLIER [www.dabs.com](http://www.dabs.com)

DETAILS [www.buffalotech.com](http://www.buffalotech.com)



If you've ever thought about how many MP3, video and digital photo files your average household has, you'll appreciate that hard disks can get eaten up extremely quickly. Ideally, you need a large amount of storage connected to your home network so you can save all your shared files in one place.

Buffalo's Terastation does exactly that, offering one terabyte (TB) of storage in a network attached storage (NAS) box. There's no onboard wireless, but there is a gigabit Ethernet network port, so you can connect the device to your existing wired network or a spare port on a wireless router.

The Terastation uses four Western Digital WD2500 ATA100 hard disks, so you have a choice of RAID modes: 0, 1 or 5. We used RAID 5 as it offers better performance and data protection, though it reduces the Terastation's capacity to 750MB. Reconfiguring for this mode took a few hours.

In the event of a hard disk failure, the front control panel lets you know which disk needs changing. This is easier said than done, though, as you practically have to dismantle the entire box to get at the hard disk.



Management is enabled with a simple web interface. As well as creating shared folders, you can create new users and groups to control access. Many of the options can be ignored though, as they're of interest only to network managers. You can configure the four USB2 ports; these can be used to connect more storage, or one can attach a printer using the station as a print server.

It might seem an expensive product, but buying the four hard disks individually would cost around £400. The extra £200 for the Terastation means it's much cheaper than buying a PC to do the same job, and it's easier to use. If you need a lot of shared storage, this is great value for money.

David Ludlow

✓ Huge amount of storage; easy to use

✗ Difficult to get at the hard disks

**SPECIFICATIONS** 1TB storage (four 250GB hard disks); Gigabit Ethernet; four USB2 ports. Part code HD-H1.0TGLR5

### REVIEW POWERLINE NETWORKING

## PHONEX Broadband Neverwire 14

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £98 inc VAT per adaptor

SUPPLIER [www.solwise.co.uk](http://www.solwise.co.uk)

DETAILS [www.phonex.com](http://www.phonex.com)

Wireless networks can be one of the most annoying technologies available. The promise of complete network freedom is often countered by interference and poor reception, particularly in old houses with thick walls. Powerline networking, which uses your mains ring to transmit data, can be used to get round the problem. Phonex Broadband is the latest company to provide this technology.

You'll need two of its network adaptors; you can then connect any existing Ethernet device to them. The adaptors are larger than those of the Devolo dLAN Starter Kit reviewed in *What's New, Shopper* April 2005, but they're more flexible. First, they have a switch so you can connect a device to a PC or switch. Second, the security is easier to configure. Rather than using software to transmit a password, you have a hardware security button. Simply follow the easy instructions and push the button on all your Neverwire 14 adaptors.

We had our network up and running quickly. However, the devices we connected defaulted to running at 10Mbit/s, rather than the maximum transfer rate of 14Mbit/s that the Neverwire



supports. We tried setting our network card manually to run at the faster speed, but it just lost the connection. It's a shame that the product is prevented from working at its top speed.

We speed-tested the adaptors by copying a 100MB file across the network and measured it at 4.65Mbit/s. However, speed is dependent on the type and length of wiring in your house.

At the measured speed, we found it fast enough for sharing broadband but a little too slow for file sharing. Still, if you have a house where WiFi doesn't work and you want to share a broadband connection, the Neverwire 14 is an effective, if expensive, alternative.

David Ludlow

✓ Easy to install; secure

✗ Network interface only 10Mbit/s; expensive

**SPECIFICATIONS** Powerline networking; Ethernet port; 14Mbit/s. Part code NET-PL-NW14/SINGLE